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[The name of the writer of the above letter is not given. The letter, however, indicates that he came to the emigration from Burlington, Iowa, and evidently lived there, as his letter was printed first in a Burlington paper. He was chosen a member of the "cabinet advisers" of the captain—nine persons. Probably these points will serve to identify him. Was he M. M. McCarver?]

LETTERS DESCRIPTIVE OF OREGON COUNTRY AND ITS EARLIER CONDITIONS.

A letter by the Rev. Alvan F. Waller to his brother at Elba, New York. It was first published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*.

Taken from the *Ohio Statesman*, March 10, 1843.

WALLAMETTE FALLS, April 6, 1842.

DEAR BROTHER: Your last came duly to hand and very much refreshed our spirits. Write every opportunity, being assured that intelligence from our friends is to us in this land like cold water to thirsty souls. You will see by my letter where I am stationed. This is in some respects a pleasant though laborious field of labor. This is and is destined to be, the great emporium of the interior of this country. Its water power for manufacturing purposes is probably not rivaled in the States; at least, few and far between are the privileges which equal or excel it; besides here is an excellent salmon fishery. As to the country, taking it all and all, it is a good farming and grazing country. The winters are so mild that the cattle and horses do well without feeding. The country is well watered, and the inhabitants are, in general, healthy. The ague and fever is the most prevalent disease, although other diseases occur. On the sea coast I believe it is more healthy than back in the country. So far as I and my family are concerned, we have been as healthy as we ever were in the States. Our little ones are quite as hearty and as lively as the fawns that skip over the plains.

Produce of all kinds, except corn, does well here, so far as it has been fairly tried. Some corn has been raised. Wheat, peas, and oats, I believe, so far as quality is concerned, can not excel in any country. Potatoes are tolerable, and in some parts excellent. Indeed, it is my candid conviction, that an industrious and economical man can live as well (fruit excepted) and make property as fast as in almost any country, and far easier than in any part of the State of New York where I have lived. Let him bring with him a few hundred dollars in cash or property, his farming utensils, etc., and settle on one of these delightful plains and the first year he can support his family from the soil, as he has nothing to do but fence, plow, and sow, and prepare a

shelter or house for his family ; yet he will have to encounter some difficulties incident to all new countries. Our mills are few and far between, and not all of the first order, but rather multiplying and improving ; though a good millwright is very much wanted, as well as apparatus for building mills and a great many wholesome settlers, embracing some capitalists who will open trade with the Islands and China, which can be done from this coast with great facility. But first of all, our government ought to extend its jurisdiction and protection over this country. The state of the country in this respect (especially for Americans), as well in respect to a currency, is unpleasant. The Hudson Bay Company seem determined to monopolize as long as possible ; yet in many respects they are quite accommodating, at least, so far as it is to their interest. They profess to claim many of the best and most valuable parts of the country by putting up a little hut without habitation and forbidding any one settling in those places. They made a claim at the Falls, on the side where I now am, about twelve years since, hewing a quantity of timber, etc., and a few years since they put up a small hut and covered it with bark.

Last fall an American took possession of a small island in the falls, but no sooner was it known at Fort Vancouver than a company of men was sent off with boards to put up a hut, and soon the governor of the fort came up, greatly incensed, called the man a pilferer, and anything but good ; he, however, went on ! A cooper wished to build a shop near me, but was informed, by orders from the fort, that if he built his shop would be torn down. He, however, went on and built ; his shop still stands. These are naked facts ; and others of the same kind, if necessary, can be forthcoming. By this you will have some clue to the state of things in this country in this respect.

I have written in great haste, as this is to be off early to-morrow morning. Besides, I have plenty of company, a number of men being here to buy salmon, of which I have the care. Others are on their way down the river. Indeed, my house is at times, as to travelers, more like a public house than a Methodist preacher's.

Your affectionate brother,

ALVIN F. WALLER.

A letter by Titian R. Peale to Thomas Morgan, Esq.,
of Washington, Pennsylvania :

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 6, 1843.

DEAR SIR: Observing the interest you have taken in the "Oregon Bill," now before Congress, I conclude that a few notes, coming from one who has recently traveled through a portion of the Oregon territory, will be acceptable to you, and probably be of use to some of your neighbors, who may feel disposed to profit by the inducements offered, should the bill pass and become a law.

Being a member of the Scientific Corps of the United States Expedition, in 1841, I had the misfortune to be wrecked, in the ship *Peacock*, at the mouth of the Columbia River, and subsequently traveled that portion of the country south of the Columbia River, known as the *Walamette Valley*, and thence across the mountains to California.

The soil, we observed, generally on that route, although not as rich as that of the Mississippi Valley, was still sufficiently so, when cultivated, to produce from twenty to forty bushels of wheat to the acre, of as good quality as any I have ever seen in my native State (Pennsylvania), which, added to the facilities for settlers in finding the land ready for the plough, without the labor of clearing, while sufficiency of the finest timber is found on the banks of the numerous streams, is alone sufficient to invite to the further settlement of the country when known. But this is not all. The winters are so mild that it has never yet been found necessary to house cattle, or provide winter food for them. They thrive and multiply beyond expectation.

Salmon are procured in great profusion in almost all the streams, and ready markets are found for them, as well as all the other products of the territory, in the markets of Mexico, South America, and the numerous islands of the Pacific Ocean. Thus, from its position in the Pacific, it has all the advantages which we possess in the Atlantic Ocean; gaining in the China what might be considered as partly lost from the European trade.

• The tract of country to which I have more particularly alluded is about two hundred and fifty miles long, including the mouth of the Columbia River, and reaching to about one hundred and fifty miles from the coast. This tract of country I considered quite equal, if not superior to Pennsylvania, both in commercial position and capability in agricultural product, and much superior in its advantages for raising cattle, etc., being generally interspersed with prairie and woodland.

Would the above hasty notes prove satisfactory to you or any of your friends, or if they only serve to awaken a spirit of inquiry, it will always be a source of pleasure to me in having communicated them.

With great respect, I have the honor to remain, yours truly,

TITIAN R. PEALE.

To Thomas Morgan, Esq., Washington, Pennsylvania.

Letter by Peter H. Burnett to the *St. Louis Reporter* :

Taken from the *Ohio Statesman* of September 11, 1844.

FORT VANCOUVER, November 10, 1843.

FRIEND PENN: I reached here on yesterday, and the grass is now as luxuriant as a wheat field. Provisions are abundant here, and Doctor McLoughlin (who is the most liberal and hospitable man in the world,)

furnishes the emigrants with wheat to be paid for in cash or in wheat next year. At the Cascades we met provisions sent us by the Doctor, and all purchased who applied, even without money. Two boats have been sent us with provisions, and the Doctor has lent two boats to the emigrants free of charge. We find him doing everything to aid the emigrants; and those who are here in the Wallamette Valley, are as hospitable as they could possibly afford to be. Business is very brisk, and labor finds ready employment and prompt payment at high prices. Necessaries of all kinds can be procured at Vancouver.

Most of the emigrants have reached here with their cattle and baggage, and will soon have their wagons here also. We find that cattle bear a fine price here and will sell readily. Cows at from \$50 to \$75, oxen at from \$50 to \$100 per yoke; labor \$1 per day; beef from 5 to 6 cents; salt salmon \$9 to \$10 per barrel of about 300 pounds; wheat \$1; flour \$4 per 100 pounds. Anything can be sold here. Butter from 25 to 37½ cents; sugar, tea, coffee, and dry goods—plenty. American horses bear better prices than they do in the States.

The country exceeds my expectations, and certainly if man can not supply all his wants here he can not anywhere. Lieutenant Fremont, who bears this, can give you further information. I must close as he leaves immediately.

PETER H. BURNETT.

Letter of Peter H. Burnett's, taken from the *Ohio Statesman* of October 23, 1844, which quotes it from the *Globe*, Washington :

LINNTON, Oregon, July 25, 1844.

I am here in our new town, which we have named as above, in respect for Doctor Linn's services for this territory. Gen. M. McCalla [M. M. McCarver] and myself have laid out the town together. He is a gentleman from Iowa Territory, and laid out Burlington, the seat of government. He is an enterprising man. Our place is ten miles from Vancouver, on the west bank of the Wallamette River, at the head of navigation, and three or four miles above the mouth of the Wallamette, and twenty-five miles below the Wallamette Falls. I have no doubt but that this place will be the great commercial town in the territory. We are selling lots at \$50 each, and sell them fast at that. At the falls there is quite a town already. I own two lots in Oregon City (the town at the falls). They are said to be worth \$200 each. I got them of Doctor McLoughlin for two lots here in Linnton. I was six weeks at Vancouver, where myself and family were most hospitably entertained by Doctor McLoughlin, free of charge. He has been a great friend to me, and has done much for this emigration generally. I find provisions high—pork 10 cents, potatoes 40 cents, flour \$4 per hundred.

But I find it costs me a little, even less to live here than at Weston.

I paid for wood the last year I lived at Weston \$75, for corn and fodder \$50, all of which is saved here. We use much less pork here than in Missouri. The salmon are running now and will continue to run until October next. They generally commence running the last of February and end in October. I have had several messes of fresh salmon. At this point we purchase of the Indians ducks, geese, swans, salmon, potatoes, feathers, and venison, for little or nothing. Ducks, four loads; geese, eight loads; swans, ten loads; salmon, four loads of powder and shot each. Feathers cost about twelve and a half cents a pound. There are more ducks, etc., here than you ever saw; also pheasants in great numbers. They remain here all the winter. I have hunted very little, being too busy. We find it very profitable to get of the Indians, to whom we trade old shirts, pantaloons, vests, and all sorts of clothing. They are more anxious to purchase clothes than any people you ever saw. You can sell anything here that was ever sold. Stocking Cary ploughs \$5 each. We have an excellent blacksmith living in our place who makes first rate Cary ploughs at thirty-one and a quarter cents a pound, he finding it. [Omitting an elaborate description of the Willamette Valley.] American cows are worth here from \$50 to \$75; American horses from \$50 to \$75; oxen from \$75 to \$125 per yoke. This is the finest country for grazing cattle you ever saw. They keep fat all winter. Butter sells at 20 to 25 cents. And, what I did not expect to find, this is a good country for hogs. At all events you have here plenty of grass, a root they call wappato, and also plenty of white oak mast. A first rate market can be had for any and everything, and you have never seen business more brisk. Times are first rate and everybody is busy. The manufacturing power is unsurpassed in the world. There are more fine sites than you ever saw. Such water power as that at the falls of Platte can be found everywhere. * *

[Omitting a portion of the letter describing the timber of Oregon.] I will not persuade you, nor will I any of my friends, to come to this country; but were I in the States again, I should come myself. For \$300 you could purchase one hundred young heifers; and in driving them here you might lose from five to ten. When you reached here they would be worth \$4,000, and in ten years, without labor or expense, would make you a splendid fortune. You can move here with less expense than you could to Tennessee or Kentucky. Your provisions, teams, etc., you have; your oxen and horses, especially your fine American mares, would be worth double as much as they would cost you there. There are very few good American horses here. The Indian horses are not so gentle as the American, nor so fine blooded. The American cattle are greatly superior to the Spanish for milk, as they give more milk and are more gentle; but the Spanish cattle are larger. Cows have calves here from fifteen to twenty months old, and sheep have lambs twice a year in some parts of territory. The reason

is they are always fat and get their growth much sooner. It is my deliberate opinion that no country in the world affords so fair an opportunity to acquire a living as this. I can see no objection to it, except it be by a man who loves liquor, for he can get none here.

PETER H. BURNETT.

From the *Ohio Statesman*, October 23, 1844. Quoted by the *Statesman* from the *St. Louis Reporter*.

We make the following extracts from two letters which were published in the *Western Pioneer* of the 6th instant, written by William L. Smith and John Holman, two emigrants to Oregon. The information from that territory, received this year, is of the most interesting character:

The prospect is quite good for a young man to make a fortune in this country, as all kinds of produce are high, and likely to remain so from the extensive demand. The Russian settlements in Asia; the Sandwich Islands; a great portion of California, and the whaling vessels of the Northwest coast, procure their supplies from this place.

There is as yet but little money in the country, and the whole trade is carried on by orders on an agent or factor. For instance, when I sell my crop of wheat, the purchaser asks me where I wish to receive the pay. Vancouver is as yet the principal point, and an order on that point enables the seller to procure goods, or cattle, or anything else for it.

The population of this country consists of French, sailors, mountain traders, missionaries, and emigrants from the States. The French population consists of old worn-out servants of the Hudson Bay Company; they universally have Indian wives, and many children, some of whom are very handsome; this part of the population are Catholics. The sailors are those who deserted from vessels while lying on the coast, and have also intermarried with the Indians, and but few of them have embraced any religion—they are, however, generally good citizens. The mountain traders are similar to the sailors, except that they have nearly all embraced the Methodist or Catholic religion.

The citizens held a meeting some time since and unanimously adopted the statutes of Iowa Territory for their code of laws until the government of the United States should make laws for them. There is little or no crime in Oregon as yet, which is attributed to the absence of spirituous liquors—and so sensible are the citizens of this fact that they are unanimous in favor of excluding it. In fact, Doctor McLoughlin has several cargoes in his warehouse now, which he bought in preference to allowing it to be sold in the country. I can not speak too highly of

this excellent man for his kindness to us all. He sent several boats loaded with provisions to meet the emigrants last fall, and continued to distribute little luxuries among us as long as we remained in reach of him—he is always on the lookout for an opportunity to bestow his charity, and bestows with no sparing hand. His intention is to quit the Hudson Bay Company and become an American citizen.

Our prairies are beautiful, soil good, and the best stock range I ever saw. I have located and recorded six sections of land, which I can hold for one year by making certain improvements thereon, which I intend doing. I can stand in my door and see over all of them. Everything is plenty, but sells high. The prospects for industrious young men are truly flattering. I do think the six sections we have now in possession are intrinsically worth \$20,000; that would be \$5 per acre, and that is not near the value, taking everything into consideration. The situation for trade and commerce is certainly better than any other country. The climate, soil, timber, water, health, products of the country, and the prospects for good society combine to make it delightful. It would astonish you to see the state of society here—more hospitality and friendship, more morality, industry, and I do believe religion, than you will see anywhere. There are a good many scattering Indians, but nothing to be feared from them.

From the *National Intelligencer*, October 28, 1843.

EMIGRATION—THE FAR WEST.

We presume most persons thought that when the tide of emigration reached Oregon it would go no farther, for it did not seem that the 'Far West' could get beyond the Pacific. We find, however, that some of the emigrants who have reached Oregon are "dissatisfied with the country, and contemplate going to California this spring." So says a letter in the *Iowa Herald* from one of the settlers, who for his own part likes the country very well, and expects to end his days there. He describes the Oregon region as rough and broken, generally heavy timbered, principally with fir, yellow pine, cedar, hemlock, oak, ash, and maple—well watered, with about one tenth prairie of excellent quality. In the streams is an abundance of fish, among which are the finest salmon in the world. Oregon City is a thriving little place, and from its advantageous position it is likely to become a thriving great one. It is situated at the head of navigation on the Oregon or Columbia River, and at the foot of Walhammat Falls, one of the greatest water powers in the world.

Of the foregoing documents, the editorial from the *Daily Tribune*, New York, of March 29, 1843, the second in the order of the excerpts, was found and copied by Dr. J. R. Wilson; for all the others the editor is indebted to Prof. Joseph Schafer.